Catholic Literature

—IN—

Catholic Homes

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE CATHOLIC SUMMER SCHOOL OF AMERICA, PLATTSBURGH, N. Y., JULY 17, 1894.

BY

Rev. J. L. O'Neil, O. P.,

EDITOR OF

"The Rosary."

ON 23

P. O'SHEA,
No. 19 Barclay Street,
NEW YORK.

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Dedicated to his Grace,
Most Reverend M. A. Corrigan, D. D.
Archbishop of New York,
with the affectionate gratitude and esteem of
the Author.

NOTICE.

This lecture was prepared solely with a view to its delivery before the Catholic Summer School. Its further publication was not then considered. It now "sees the light" because of the counsel of literary friends whose judgment I esteem, and in the hope that it may more effectively serve the cause for which it was originally written. The gracious acceptance by Archbishop Corrigan, of the dedication of this slender volume encourages me to hope that the Clergy will recognize the importance of the subject, and that they will commend to their flocks the work of Catholic literature in Catholic homes.

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Catholic Literature in Catholic Homes.

INTRODUCTION.

IN accepting an invitation to address the members of the Catholic Summer School, on the subject of Catholic literature in our Catholic homes, I presumed that I would be expected to talk from the fund of my experience as an editor of a Catholic magazine, and from the still wider resources of my life as a missionary priest.

In this spirit I shall speak, as one knowing, in a manner, whereof he speaks; and as I look beyond the confines of this gathering, and consider our big, broad country, with its millions hungry for the bread of the Word, I shall speak right on, as Antony did, in plain, blunt language. I shall talk without trying to preach, and yet my message will be in religion's name and for the sake of the little ones in Christ. I recognize and applaud the good intentions of the founders and promoters of the Summer School; I have faith in the splendid work they seek to accomplish; but I would consider all these efforts as vain, if their fruits were gathered only by those able personally to attend the sessions of this School.

I admit that the improvement of the Summer School scholars is the immediate desideratum; but their advantages must not be held as a mere personal emolument. Rather should they be received as a precious trust to be shared with less fortunate brethren, a legacy to be bequeathed to generations yet unborn.

Considering the condition of intellectual and spiritual life among many Catholics in this country, I realize how inadequate is the school, and, in a manner, how helpless is the pulpit. Therefore do I turn to the Christian home as an essential element in the education, the intellectual and spiritual development of the children of the Faith.

The notion that it is impossible for a Catholic to lose the gift of Faith is a serious error into which many of our people fall. The story of those who have lost this precious grace, of those who have been deprived of this inheritance, is a peculiarly sad one. That in many instances it was neither in protest nor in formal apostacy, that such Catholics went out; that it was solely a matter of letting the Faith die away, should increase our anxiety. Deprived of its necessary nourishment, stripped of its proper safeguards, exposed to the withering blight of infidelity or indifference, weakened by associations that were inimical to it, the light gradually paled, the fire burned low, and the second generation sat around the dull ashes of a once glowing Faith, while their children scatter even those ashes to the winds.

The dangers of which I speak are not peculiar to country places; the cities number too many whose Faith has been wrecked. On this point I can give expert testimony.

There is no question as to the efficiency of our schools; but their most ardent admirer must not claim for them the power to shape and control beyond a certain time. We must also consider the children who do not attend Catholic schools, those who cannot attend them. Nor is there any insinuation that the pulpit has lost its power, but we must admit that it is somtimes easier to fill our churches with eloquence than with people. No statistics are available on this head, but I venture the opinion that on an average the regular attendants at the parish Mass and sermon, in the ordinary congregation, do not number more than one fourth of the regular church-goers. We are building churches to-day; is the spiritual edifice rising apace? The splendid monuments of faith and generosity reared by men and women of the Ages of Faith, the glorious Basilicas of Catholic Europe furnish an object lesson to us.

The descendants of these noble men and women have not all fallen away, but it is a sad and bitter thought that so many of them enter these temples only on rare occasions, and then perhaps to listen to a discourse presenting proofs that there is a God!

Will history repeat itself in the United States? God forbid! But it is not a matter of prayer or hope only. We must be up and doing. Schools

and churches are not sufficient. Parish libraries, and libraries in general, literary societies, church clubs, reading circles, sodalities, and confraternities, are all worthy of consideration, but again the fact stands out, they are limited in scope, in time, in numbers. Many of these organizations are swathed in red tape; the spirit is smothered under signs and symbols; emblems and badges too often stand for what does not exist. I am convinced that these associations can never be a substitute for the home.

HOME TRAINING NECESSARY.

The development of intellectual and spiritual life, in continuation of that for which the school lays the foundation, in assistance to the work of the pulpit, must, therefore, chiefly depend on the home. To the members of this Summer School, including, as it does, teachers, in whose keeping are the tender years of childhood, parents, on whom rests the fuller responsibility of their children's training, and others to whom the blessings and burdens of parents may later come, I would say, that we need to-day, not so much exact men and exact women, nor mere ready men and ready women, but full men and full women, full of the spirit of Faith, loyal to the precepts it imposes, eager to extend its kingdom, alive to the dangers that threaten it, and resolved to preserve it vigorous and unblemished as a sacred inheritance for their descendants.

This maintenance and continuance of the Faith

are largely dependent upon those to whom this royal gift comes with birth. I make not light of accessions to the Church through conversions. I honor those who have paid the price of sacrifice, for the peace and joy of the one fold, but it is beyond question that the great bulk of our Catholic population is such by birth, and such will it probably continue. The responsibilities of our Catholic homes are, therefore, decided, weighty, and not only for those immediately subject to them, but, in a broad way, as mighty influences for the edification of their Catholic brethren, and for the enlightenment of the non-Catholic public.

THREE CLASSES OF HOMES.

Here I would note three classes of homes, and, bearing on the subject of Catholic literature, I shall give my estimate of them. The rich, as a class, are able to do much for this cause: as a class, they do little for it in this country. Many of them are the makers of their own fortunes; probably because of this they are slow in giving contributions for affairs purely intellectual. We are told that their sons will be more liberal. With themselves, no doubt; with the Church, I question. My experience suggests a prayer that the coming generation will not loosen the bonds of Faith as they loosen the strings of their fathers' purses.

Whatever the future may bring forth, it is a fact, here and now, that side by side with evidences of

good social position, elegant appointments, even luxuries, there is too often a striking contrast by the signs of intellectual stagnation, or of absolute poverty of Catholic literature. This condition is compatible with a certain piety, with generosity even, for I have known such men and women to be liberal when charity appealed. When the question is of mind needs, they seem to be unconscious of the connection between Faith and its necessary intellectual props. I have further observed that where there is not complete stagnation, where it is recognized that it is the proper thing to have books and magazines, those that are Catholic are often conspicuous by their absence. I have a sincere sympathy for these destitute rich men and women, for few will tell them of their wretched state.

The poor, I do not altogether blame for the indifference that marks their lives. Want of early education, the necessity of almost continual toil, home surroundings largely determined by poverty, the certainty that there can be little thought for culture where the struggle for bread is the absorbing one, the fact that, on this head, the rich have been without compassion for the poor, that parish libraries are generally of recent institution, and often poorly managed, that reading circles are a thing of yesterday, that sermons or advices on reading have not been over frequent in our churches, that the only instruction on this subject, which many have received, has been the missionary's occasional exhortation, which

was minimized, to a great extent, by the rapacity of the book-sellers, that the only suggestion otherwise made to the people in favor of Catholic literature was the wail (that few of them heard) of an editor or publisher, the disinterestedness of whose appeal was discounted by the accompanying cry for back-pay, or still more heinous, for payment in advance—these are factors that must be considered as extenuating circumstances, when we speak of the poor, and their bookless homes. And yet, in the peculiar experience that I have had, I have found them more sympathetic, more responsive, more generous, more active, the case being properly presented, than their well-to-do neighbors. I have spoken in many churches on this subject, and I have found that the poor, the laboring classes are prompt, affectionate and warm, where the rich turn coldly and ignorantly away.

Finally, there is the great middle class, to use a distinction that, in this case, implies merely financial circumstances, that involves no notion of aristocracy, as usually understood, for, to the ranks of the true aristocracy of learning and virtue, rich and poor can alike gain admission.

Among the middle classes I find the greatest activity and zeal in behalf of Catholic literature. They are foremost in the work of reading circles, zealous for the advantages of the Catholic Educational Union, on the alert for every occasion that will contribute to their stock of knowledge. Their home life often breathes an atmosphere that is fra-

grant of intelligent Catholicity; and, while their attainments are not always on a line with their expectations, it is nevertheless, a laudable ambition that spurs them on to better things, the possession of which in fuller measure will be their children's happy gain.

Among those who are most earnest I find a spirit of sustained interest, intelligent activity, an eagerness to learn, a willingness to be directed; and these are long and vigorous strides in the right direction. I find among those people that the day is passing when the family library consisted of the gorgeously bound, absurdly expensive Bible, the ornamental prayer book, and the premium book that was held as a family heirloom. I find, however, that the enthusiasm which is aroused among the people in general, on the occasion of a mission or a retreat, in in favor of good reading, soon evaporates. Under the impulse of the missionary's exhortations, books are bought, Catholic journals are subscribed for, but, under the spirit of indifference which is normal, and of that mental torpor which is habitual with them, many sink back into the dull routine of no reading at all, or, at most, of the miserable elements of a gossiping "Daily" or a sensational "Weekly."

THE APOSTOLATE OF GOOD READING.

The new force that has been called into being by the energetic efforts of the missionaries of the apos-

tolate of the Catholic press, is happily at work, but we do not care to see it exercised only for the benefit of its own agents. It must be truly an apostolate; its work of evangelizing must be active. We desire that it will be as a leaven among those whose sense of need is dull, and whose poverty (especially if they are rich) should appeal more strongly to us because of their very helplessness. We must rouse them, the mental consumptives, the spiritual cripples, whose food has not been even the clean husk, but the very refuse of insipidity, sensationalism, stale wit, poverty-stricken ideas, baldness of thought more baldly expressed: a mass of literary rubbish. We must inspire them with new tastes, new hopes, with a longing for that strength which comes to those whose dish is not dainty, but whose hearty appetite and discriminating taste enable them to partake freely of the good things set before them by the intellectual caterers of every age.

At this point I would speak of the clergy and Catholic teachers as the leaders in this work and of those who should be their zealous helpers—the men and women favored by worldly means, by opportunities of leisure, by such educational advantages as are not available for all, and who are animated by a true spirit of zeal for the spread of Catholicity. As book buyers, as liberal financial contributors in behalf of Catholic journals, (often at a loss), as subscribers for Catholic magazines and papers, as friendly encouragers of worthy enterprises in this field, the

clergy, as a body, stand out conspicuous, and a strong word of praise is their due. For still further work we must rely on them; and, now that the material prosperity of many parishes exempts priests from the harassing labor of building churches and schools, we confidently look to their prudence and zeal for such instructions on this point, to their respective charges, as will present to them the necessity of taking a more active part in the cause of Catholic literature, in the better equipment of Catholic homes as essential elements in the work of Christian education, in the building up of the spiritual temples, without which, those of brick or stone have no value save as sad reminders of what ought to be.

The notion, too widely spread, that the support of a truly Catholic press is a mere matter of alms-giving, will disappear; the rich and the charitable will get beyond the limited sphere of sewing for the poor and taking up collections for them. We shall have fewer Mrs Jellybys, but more Father Heckers. Precious and oft neglected minds will appeal to us with a pleading that need not deaden the cry for food and shelter. We shall make our reading circles more expansive, more efficient, even for those who may not be in active association with them. We shall enlist all available influences to co-operate with priests and teachers, whose work must be fundamental, especially for the coming generation. We must encourage the multitude to shake off that indifference to Catholic reading, which is so marked.

We must rouse many of our so-called, literary clubs from their sluggishness, so that we may realize in them something more than the merely social. This I say particularly of men's societies.

On this point, "namin" no names, like Sairy Gamp, I shall take the risk of being considered rash in my statements rather than invoke the wrath of some of our high-class un-literary clubs.

We shall stimulate the people to a love of Catholic reading as it involves a knowledge of true history, and a study of the Faith, its teachings, its effects upon nations, their manners and morals, their arts, science, literature. Our people should know to some extent the share of the Church in shaping and developing modern civilization; her influence on laws and society, even where her gentle yoke has been foresworn; the careers of her noble sons and daughters, in all the ways inspired by love for God and zeal for their fellows that make up the glorious story of historic Christianity. There are many of our American Catholics to whom Lacordaire's thought applies: that we need a more thorough knowledge of the Church's great men, her saints, her civilization, her moral and civil superiority, the progress made by humanity under the influence of the Cross; and again, that we must know the attitude of the Church on all the questions of the day, in which souls run more risk of being led astray, than of being enlightened by the modern, self-appointed teachers.

Pride of Faith and loyalty to its precious graces

will be the fruits of such studies, and with these will come a culture and refinement of taste, a keener judgment, a heartier appreciation of Catholic treasures, an intelligent sympathy with living Catholic writers and their struggles, a more active, a sustained demand for true Catholic literature. Like a divine fire, this spirit will spread, and like a living flame, it will burn in the hearts of rich and poor. The reign of the mere newspaper will be challenged; the sensational "weekly" will be banished; the unsavory publications that sap the minds especially of our poor, will no longer find ready entrance to Catholic homes.

To share in such a work is glorious. Verily, it is an apostolate, and its ministers can rejoice in this likeness to our Blessed Lord, that they will go about doing good. Hovels will know them, and be the brighter for their coming. The weary watcher on the bed of pain will be glad for the cheer that they will bring; even the poor prisoner, the child of vice, and the victim of crime, will be remembered more generally than he is now remembered. He will have a warmer place in the hearts of the missionaries of good reading, and a fuller measure of their loving care.

If you who are members of this Summer School are to be congratulated on the advantages you possess, you are also to be warned, because of consequent responsibilities in the great cause of which I speak. To secure lasting results, you will need the

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missionary spirit born of love for God, and zeal for the Church, and which is ever tender in the solicitude of its exertions for the less favored ones of the fold, and for those beyond its pleasant places.

If you go out from this school animated by such a spirit, and if you continue faithful in its zealous practice, you will have the consolation of knowing that your work will be for the spread of the kingdom of God on earth, and for the reign of Christ in many hearts. On the contrary, if you rest satisfied with your own improvement, if you selfishly enjoy what you here receive, the probability is, that you will sink into a groove or rut whose chief characteristics are narrowness, intellectual Pharisaism, abominable priggishness, from which we should devoutly pray to be delivered.

But there are others who have duties and responsibilities in this work: the Catholic editor, the Catholic writer, the Catholic publisher.

CATHOLIC PUBLISHERS.

I shall begin with the publishers. It is the inalienable right of any Catholic to set up in business as a publisher, but it is not the right of any man whose chief object in publishing is the financial gain he may acquire, to expect the Church to espouse his personal, mercantile, and often mercenary cause; nor can he claim enrollment among the knights of the press. There is no need for dispute in this matter. Business, it is said, is open to all. All right, say I;

but then, no knighthood in the shop. Let it be mere shop; and let the Catholic publisher of this stripe seek his rights in the market, with the Catholic grocer or the Catholic tailor. His place is not nearer the sanctuary than theirs.

Far be it from me to withhold one iota of just praise from those men who have identified themselves in an energetic and generous way with Catholic interests in the publication of Catholic works: their reward is in Heaven. I have noticed that it is not the most disinterested, the truest lovers of art, the closest students, who grow wealthy; nor are the veterans always in the front financial ranks.

WE HAVE TOO MANY PUBLICATIONS.

Over-production is an oft heard cry. It fits, with a painful fitness, our Catholic books of devotion, and our Catholic journals. Decidedly, there are too many; and no intelligent man doubts that money gain is the chief object sought in their publication. The elimination of three-fourths of our modern pious books would entail no loss in the spiritual life. I am also convinced, from many observations, that the literary, the religious, and the financial sides would be benefited and advanced if there were fewer Catholic organs.

In this cause a "fair field and entry for all" is a false cry. Theoretical rights and individual claims ought not to stand against the superior claims of a cause injured by such advocates, who profanely in-

trude themselves on sacred ground. To write a brief obituary of a score or more of so-called Catholic weeklies would be a joy to any man having sense enough to see the gain that would result from their death. An appropriate motto for their tombstone might be "Nothing in their life so became them as their leaving it."

CATHOLIC EDITORS.

Our editors—the subject is somewhat worn, so are some of the editors. Taken as a class, apart from the clippers, who, by false courtesy, are erroneously called "editors," our Catholic editors are intelligent and zealous in their work. We cannot claim many who are able to stand the test recently proposed by a writer in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, but allowance must be made because of the poor compensation available for the "hired editor" who does the literary work for a struggling or penurious publisher. We hope much from time, that bountiful dispenser of future gifts. We hope even for the literary millenium, when there will be, on all sides, a broad, liberal, enterprising, truly Catholic spirit, abreast of the times, popular in the true sense of this much abused word; when editors will know fully and conscientiously their high responsibilities and their duties to readers, young and old, to writers, whom they will generously encourage and liberally compensate; when the "patent inside" will have taken its place in a museum or a foundry; when the

scissors will have grown dull and the tinkle of the grinder will not be heard; when the weeklies will have ceased to pilfer and steal from the magazines, on a supposed basis of justification, in which the rates are a $50 or a $75 story, or a $15 or a $20 poem, for an occasional fifty cent notice of the plundered magazine, or perhaps no notice at all; when the literary pirates and editorial freebooters will have been embalmed, in story and legend, with the illustrious Captain Kidd; when mutual help and generosity will be the order of the day; when Catholic magazines will not entertain unreasonable expectations of free advertising in the Catholic weeklies; when magazine editors will gladly accord a reasonable use of their literary material in return for intelligent notices and just criticism; when appropriate, judicious comment will take the place of the shop-worn, threadbare, fulsome flatteries that are the stock in trade of the literary "hacks"; when every dapper young fellow better able to wield an Indian club than a quill, will not be consumed with a desire to edit a society journal; when job printers will not aspire to be publishers and editors; when the parish calendar will be what its name indicates; when our literary sucklings, swaddlings, and foundlings will have been put in their cradles for needed rest and quiet; when the small army of beardless youths, publishing, in the name of unnumbered literary (?) societies, puerile journals for the sake of a chance grocery or saloon advertisement, will have

been routed; when the pigmies with their tin hatchets will have been brushed aside, and the giants with mighty axes will be able to clear the way—then the millennium will be at hand.

CATHOLIC WRITERS.

What shall I say of our Catholic writers? First, that not all Catholics who write are Catholic writers. I know all about the laborer and his hire, about bread and butter, family dependence, provision for children. These are favorite themes with the average literary man and woman. I admit their full force; but I wish to say, that I have little patience with the sickly subserviency and religious poltroonery that fling cap high in air, and lift the ready shout in claiming for the Church as Catholic writers, men and women whose pens are never employed except for gain, whose channels of publication are generally non-Catholic, whose subjects have no bearing on the Church or her interests. I have no quarrel with these writers, but I do not consider them Catholic writers.

Having had some experience in this line, I would say that their sentiments are in harmony with old Doctor Johnson, whose anger rose when it was hinted to him that men could write for any motive save that of money gain. They probably agree, also, with Zola, who talks about money-making writers enjoying a freedom and independence that will enable them to become the only aristocracy of the twentieth cen-

tury. This is a queer mixture of half truth and falsehood.

Allow me to quote from a letter that I hold, written by a well-known writer: "Catholic carpenters, stonemasons, plumbers, designers, and architects are paid at the full market rates for their work on churches, convents, asylums, etc. It seems to me equally proper that Catholic authors should be paid in the same way, especially when they produce something of uncommon merit."

As this gentleman had his own work in mind, I do not question either the modesty or the commercial logic of his remarks. My only comment is, that the spirit thus announced is the spirit of some of our Catholics who write, and it is so mercenary that it acts as an effective barrier, excluding them from the glorious apostolate of the Catholic press, except as hirelings.

It is only a few writers who are over sensitive, exacting, avaricious, dishonorable, disposed to make unfair demands upon struggling editors. To the praise of the majority of Catholics blessed with the talent for writing, and feeling a call to its vocation, it must be said that they are devoted, generous, self-sacrificing; and we need them. We need men and women who are willing to forego some of the privileges of money in the cause of the Church, who are willing to leave the care of their literary name to the gratitude of an enlightened posterity.

In his own good time God will provide for the cor-

ner and for the head of the arch, but now we need foundation stones. They are at hand. I salute with affection and gratitude the noble band who refuse to trail their banner in the market-place, who mingle not in the clamor of the counting-room, who are found in the midst of the combat inspired by holy hopes and ardent desires for the triumph of their sacred cause. The spirit of sacrifice will sustain them. They will be true to the word of Lacordaire, that the more good we desire to do for religion, the fuller must be the pledges of our conviction that we give to the world by the holiness and self-denial of our lives. Without this spirit we might have progress in a merely literary way, but would its dominant tone be Catholic? Would it be a power for God and souls?

I believe, therefore, that with greater fidelity to a noble editorial standard; with a fuller development of the knightly spirit among our writers; with the suppression of a number of journals and magazines that have no reason, literary or religious, to live, and only a slim financial one, we shall have a better case for Clergy and people.

OUR CATHOLIC PEOPLE.

The people: these are the forces we must win, for they are our field. Among them and for them we must labor. With some it will be a matter of bringing them to read at all. With others it will be a duty of direction. In the April number of the *Cath-*

olic Reading Circle Review, a paper was published on the literature of the poor. It occurs to me that it would be practical if a special edition of that article were issued by this Summer School, and a copy sent to every priest in the country. There is more gospel in it than in some pulpit talks I have heard. The author wrote from his heart and from his priestly experience.

The task before us is heavy. We must wage relentless warfare on the average story-paper, the criminally illustrated sheets, the majority of the secular "boys' and girls' papers," the wearisome, abominable, would-be comic papers, the work of the modern scribblers who commit so many crimes in the name of wit and humor and good old comedy.

READ A GOOD NEWSPAPER.

We must encourage judicious reading of the best daily papers, pointing out the valuable features of this modern fourth estate, this mighty power that yet needs a guiding hand to direct it in its wonderful career. We must warn our people against the danger of becoming mere newspaper readers, for mere newspaper readers seldom go beyond the daily record of vice and crime. Great caution is necessary in discriminating among the multitude of daily newspapers, in directing and preserving the young.

From an article written by J. W. Keller, president of the New York Press Club, which appeared in the

Forum, August, 1893, I take the following, which needs no comment; "The fundamental principle of metropolitan journalism to-day, is to buy white paper at three cents a pound, and sell it at ten cents a pound. And in some quarters it does not matter how much the virgin whiteness of the paper is defiled, so long as the defilement sells the paper." And John A. Cockerill's arraignment of the secular press nearly two years ago, in the *Cosmopolitan*, was even stronger, because more detailed. "The Daily Crimes," he concluded, "would be the best name for almost any sensational newspaper of to-day." Years ago Dr. Brownson said: "The popularity of a paper is in inverse ratio to its worth." If we apply this rule to the press of our day, we must pause in amazement. I would not be understood as making an attack on the daily press in general, the need of which I recognize, as well as its power and the good it does. I merely suggest, from its own household, caution, especially for the young.

Regarding books it is not my purpose to speak. Catholic weeklies I have mentioned. I add this one word: There is scarcely a Catholic family in the United States that is too poor to subscribe for one, and a good one ought to be in every Catholic home.

MAGAZINES.

Considering that the bulk of our American literature comes in the form of the magazine, the discus-

sion of our part in this work is timely. According to figures published by the Librarian of Congress, there were in 1893, 1051 magazines, reviews, periodicals, devoted to general literature, showing an increase in ten years of 623. Add to these that magazines devoted to special lines of science, technical arts, etc., have grown in the same period from 146 to 611; law journals from 43 to 60; medical and hygienic from 121 to 201. These figures proclaim the new drift in which not only professional men, scientific workers and authors are prominent, but all sorts of people. Various trade societies have special organs for the propagation of their cause, and that they may expound their views, and advance the interests of their different guilds. The movement in this direction seems to be general.

The claim made by some distinguished writers that magazine readers waste time, that they cannot fully master any question that receives only magazine treatment, and that they must remain ignorant to the end of their lives, of more than separate facts and partial glimpses of subjects they have thus studied, is one which deserves consideration. Nevertheless, taking due account of the danger that magazines may beget a habit of desultory reading, and thus interfere with a love for books, it may be said of the best of these periodicals that they wield a considerable influence in behalf of culture and refinement, by bringing to a very large class of readers some of the best thoughts of living writers, on a practically unlimited number of subjects. Full mas-

tery is a big word. Nor do I know of any law obliging us to such mastery, nor of any principle suggesting the feasibility of trying to become experts in every line. Specialists have their sphere. The multitude can rejoice if they have, for their state, a sufficient knowledge of things they ought to know, which saves them from the charge of ignorance. Talents and money the magazine publishers command, and the people have the enjoyment of their accumulated resources, literary and artistic, at a trifling cost. It may also be objected that the haste, the urgency demanded in some features of such publications, deprives authors of the opportunity of fuller development, more accurate treatment, more artistic finish; and that the temptation to greed, to which writers are exposed, because of the liberal compensations allowed by great magazines, lowers the standard and ideals that ought to prevail. The question of avarice is personal and not in our line; but, I see no reason why a trained writer cannot acquire such brevity and pithiness, strengthened by clearness of style and vigor of expression, that, when he handles a subject of which he has sufficient grasp, the ordinary reader of his magazine article will not derive all the advantages available for him. Nor should the writer suffer any loss of literary prestige.

Again, magazines are not periodical literature in the sense that their value passes with the time of their publication, but only as to their method of issue. Comprising, as they do, some of our best contemporary thought, well digested, condensed, presented in

most attractive form with all the helps of the modern bookmaker's art, in paper, presswork and illustration, the standard magazines are put before the busy world to meet urgent needs. After fulfilling their mission of satisfying readers of limited leisure, they take their place as bound volumes on our library shelves, there to become a permanent and important part of our books.

The magazine, with its freshness of change, its opportuneness, its regularity, its features of permanence, holds a place midway between the daily paper and the book. I believe it has certain advantages over both, and that both invade its legitimate domain. The book in periodical parts is a partial imitation of the magazine. The Sunday newspaper, and in some cases the daily, takes on much that belongs, of custom, if not of right, to the magazine.

SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS.

The methods adopted by promoters of modern journalistic enterprise are many. The essay is published; advanced sheets of forthcoming books are secured; even music and illustrations figure in the bulky make-up of the modern Sunday paper, the value of which, in different ways, is admitted. But how many read this enormous mass? The day is not sufficient, and the rush of the daily output during the week, relegates the daily predecessor to oblivion's shades. Who can say that the Sunday journal wins lasting appreciation from the troops who see in it only *quantity* for a nickel? Who can say that such

newspapers elevate tastes, or serve the best interests of the people whose exclusive reading they are? I do not here discuss the danger to attendance at Church services by the distractions of Sunday newspapers; I only wish to suggest that they would be truer to their just work if they did not encroach on the ground of the magazines.

The functions of the daily press have become abnormal. Able to pay large sums, they tempt certain writers to ways that are venal, by withdrawing them from their legitimate field. Little can thus be added to the reputation of these contributors, for their name, like their work, with the mass of readers, is merely ephemeral. The daily press should be satisfied with the $50,000,000 spent annually for it; it should leave the magazine field to its rightful cultivators.

Nevertheless, I doubt if the newspaper, daily or Sunday, will ever crowd out the magazine, unless we degenerate into a race of intellectually dyspeptic bolters.

MAGAZINES *versus* BOOKS.

Because of its timeliness, its change, its freshness, its cheapness, the magazine has an advantage over the book. The quality of the average magazine is as good as the quality of the average book; its variety is beyond question; its quantity decidedly greater. Several dollars for a volume, means one subject, soon read, soon ended, ordinarily. Several dollars for a magazine, means a year's delightful, varied reading, and much more of it.

CATHOLIC MAGAZINES.

It is on Catholic magazines that I would linger, and yet not over long. Frankly, I admit that on this point there is room to question the necessity of their number. A full discussion of this feature might be indelicate for me, but it may be justly said that an undignified scramble for patronage, by a multitude of poorly conducted, top-heavily religious periodicals, some of them living on the installment plan, by quasi collections, claiming literary support on the ground of piety or pity, is not an edifying spectacle. I am confident it does not mean a vigorous growth in Catholic literature; I am certain that it is a handicap, in other ways, for it scatters resources, distracts interests, and means too many demands on the clergy for introductions, on Catholic writers for free contributions, and on the people for subscriptions. So long as local interests and special purposes are allowed to predominate, the great cause will suffer, at least negatively.

In some of the great secular magazines, Catholic writers have appeared; Catholic subjects have been discussed; and only occasionally can we complain of misrepresentation or injustice. But we need our own organs, and we should continue the work of pushing them to the front. It is not a libel to say that we are behind our secular contemporaries in material and artistic make-up and in circulation. Outside of our own people we are little known. Seldom are our distinctively Catholic periodicals seen on the news-stands, and only occasionally are

they noticed by the secular press. Do I blame the daily papers? By no means. They are willing to meet us half way. But here comes the old cry of "Expense," and "No money." As a fact I admit the "No money" cry. As a necessary condition I deny it. Let us make the right kind of magazines, with a definite, legitimate aim; let us present them to the people in the right way, and I believe they will gain a large circulation, and exercise their fair share of influence. It is deplorable, but true, that the very existence of some of our deserving periodicals is not known to the Catholic public, beyond their subscribers. And the fact that we realize little, in trying to make them better known, from many of the notices of magazines that appear in our weeklies, that efforts must be personal, and that the clergy must be interested and not harassed, confirms me in the belief, that we are not growing simply because we are multiplying.

ADVERTISING.

Here I would speak of a department of magazines, little understood by our people. I mean the advertising pages. This sounds vulgar, perhaps. I believe money is considered a vulgar thing, but we are not yet in Utopia; hence we must be practical. The secular magazines derive, from advertising, a very large income, with a margin of profit that mounts high into the thousands. This enables them to be liberal and even lavish in their expenditures for the improvement of their work, for no one of experience

supposes that they depend wholly on subscriptions. I understand how Catholic periodicals are circumstanced. I know that they cannot publish certain kinds of advertising, though some of our weeklies are not over choice. But we have a right to a fair share of the legitimate advertising that appears in the secular magazines; and I believe we would obtain it if our people were better instructed. In refusing their custom to us advertisers give two reasons. The first is, that Catholics, as a class, are not readers; the second, that Catholics, as a class, do not buy goods such as are usually advertised in standard magazines.

I here deny both of these statements because they are too sweeping, as I have often before combatted them. I believe it is not through an error of invincible ignorance that these business men so talk; rather is it a convenient pretext for denying our claims. Readily these dealers take the money of Catholics, but we receive no business credit for it.

As a body we do not stand together in an intelligent way. The rich Catholics could wield a considerable influence in this line; and the poor could do much, if both classes acted with an interested and intelligent spirit. Our indifference to our own cause is well known to the selfish tradesman, and the wily advertising agent. They play us against ourselves. The advertising agent, unlike the Irishman who wanted his half in the middle, would take a half at both ends. He declines, therefore, to do any business with us, except on his own Shylock terms. He is satisfied. He knows that we shall not resent his

action, but that we shall go right on, spending our money, without receiving any recognition in this line. We should, therefore, make our people understand the advantages of a well-conducted advertising department in a Catholic magazine; and the necessity of patronizing those who patronize us. By awakening an intelligent spirit on this head we can bring to bear on advertisers a pressure that will reach their vital spot, the seat of their only sensitiveness or tenderness—their cash receipts, and make them realize that if the money of Catholics be acceptable, the claims of Catholic magazines should be recognized. Willingly I admit that such a consummation will not be hastened by a hungry horde of insignificant publications clamoring, in the name of the Catholicity they but poorly serve, and by no means honor, for a share in the great business of our American advertisers.

A CONCLUDING WORD.

Considering, therefore, the present magnitude of the magazine press, and the probability that it will continue to grow in influence, we ought to make an effort for our rightful place. Priests and people must labor in a fuller way than by their own subscriptions. They can "talk up" good magazines, they can advertise them—the clergy from their pulpits, and the people among their friends. And right here I would say, that the generous interest of which I speak, is compatible with the most intense devotion to local and special works, unless we identify ourselves with

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such works in a narrow and short-sighted way, forgetting that they are only a part of the great whole. Faber was right when he said that little good men prevent about one-third of the good that ought to be done in the Church.

Bristling and snapping in the selfish zeal which supposes that whatever does not come to their little work is lost to religion, they antagonize, in a manner, broad efforts, because, forsooth, these are not bringing grist to their mill; because they do not emanate from their parish or diocese, and revolve around it like obedient satellites.

May God deliver us from the Lilliputians, who would bind even this giant of the Catholic press. Zeal is not measured by canonical rules of what we ought to do from justice, or what it is becoming to do from charity. While ever obedient to the check of prudence and the guidance of discretion, true zeal, which is a gift to large-minded men and women, overleaps the letter of rules or conventional barriers, and throws itself cheerfully into good works. Small men are not capable of this, but they are most efficient as clogs and impediments; and the example of their indifference chills the warmth of many an ardent soul. I say frankly, that if as much energy were displayed by some in antagonizing the evils of the secular press and of bad reading in general as they show in warning off from their own preserves, because of petty, personal concerns, men and women who are at least disinterested, we would see better results for the great cause of Catholic literature in Catholic homes.

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